

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The final Office Action dated September 12, 2006, has been received and its contents carefully reviewed. Applicant appreciates the indication by the Examiner that claims 6, 7, 21, 22, and 24 recite allowable subject matter.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5, 8-20, 23, 25 and 26 are rejected and 6, 7, 21, 22 and 24 are objected to by the Examiner. With this response, claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 18, 21, and 23 have been amended, and claims 5 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-4, 6-19, and 21-26 remain pending in this application.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5, 8-20, 23, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art (hereinafter "ARA") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,151,091 to Muramatsu (hereinafter "Muramatsu").

Applicant submits that as claims 5 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, the rejections of claims 5 and 20 are moot.

The rejection of claims 1-4, 8-19, 23, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Related Art (hereinafter "ARA") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,151,091 to Muramatsu (hereinafter "Muramatsu") are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

With respect to claim 1, claim 1 has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 6 identified by the Examiner as being allowable. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over ARA in view of Muramatsu.

Claims 2-4 and 8-16 each depend from claim 6, identified by the Examiner as reciting allowable subject matter and each includes by reference all of the subject matter recited by claim 6. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 2-4 and claims 8-16 are each allowable over ARA and Muramatsu at least by way of their dependencies from claim 6.

Claims 18, 19, 23, 25 and 26 each depend from claim 21.

With respect to claim 17, claim 17 has been amended to recite the subject matter of claim 21 identified by the Examiner as being allowable. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over ARA in view of Muramatsu.

Claims 18, 19, 23, 25 and 26 each depend from claim 21, identified by the Examiner as reciting allowable subject matter and each includes by reference all of the subject matter recited by claim 21. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 18, 19, 23, 25 and 26 are each allowable over ARA and Muramatsu at least by way of their dependencies from claim 17.

Claims 6, 7, 21, 22, and 24 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claims 6 and 21 have been rewritten in independent format reciting all of the limitations of their respective intervening base claims as suggested by the examiner. Claim 7 depends from claim 6 and claims 22 and 24 each depend from claim 21. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 6, 7, 21, 22, and 24 are allowable and respectfully requests that the objection to the claims be withdrawn.

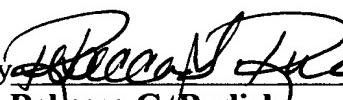
Applicant believes the application is in application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. *A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.*

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 12, 2006

By 

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